

## **Help for High School Math**

High school math - it's a challenge for many students, but almost anyone can be successful in high school math classes. This article with some ideas from [Susan Carkner](#) (August 2010) will provide a few simple strategies to help improve math marks and increase confidence on math assignments and tests.

### **Practice, Practice, Practice**

Math is learned by doing. Math homework helps you learn the concepts introduced in class. It's not enough to pay attention as the teacher demonstrates a lesson - you must also practice the math yourself, by completing homework and daily assignments (and make sure to always correct your work carefully). Imagine playing in a hockey game or a piano recital without ever having practiced. Is it enough to have simply watched the coach or teacher play? Of course not. Doing math homework helps make the work more automatic for your brain, and allows you to reach a better understanding of the subject. In other words - for math, practice makes perfect!

### **Learn First Things First**

High school math classes are almost always structured so that simpler concepts are presented early on, and more complex ideas are learned later in the course. Make sure you understand the course work as you go along, so that you can build on that knowledge later. For example, students use their knowledge of simple multiplication to solve the algebra problem  $2A = 4$ . Imagine how hard it would be to solve this problem without knowing that 2 times 2 equals 4!

### **Show Off Your Work**

While reading the textbook and taking notes in class, pay attention to how the teacher and textbook present their work when solving a problem. Make sure you copy everything the teacher writes, in the same way. There are certain conventions that almost always apply, such as aligning equal signs vertically on the paper when solving algebra problems. The teacher may have other standards they would like you to follow. On tests and assignments, your marks will partially depend on showing your reasoning process - so for higher math marks, make sure to show your work, and make it as easy to read as possible! Use the notes given by the teacher to complete your homework so that you get used to the manner the teacher would like you to show your work (which means - make sure you've taken good, legible notes that you can use).

### **Reach Out for Help**

Finally, don't be afraid to ask for help with math if you need it. If you are doing the homework regularly, you will know when you have difficulty and you can ask the teacher for help immediately. Make sure you always use time given in class to work on examples or to start on homework so that you can ask for help before you're trying the rest of the work at home.

If you feel completely over your head, perhaps it is time to consider a peer tutor or outside tutor to help with your math course. You can find out more about peer tutors or can see a list of outside tutors in the resource class, room 23. Sometimes a few sessions with a tutor are all it takes to clear up some misconceptions and help a student achieve higher math marks.

High school math can be intimidating, but success is within reach. With a little help and some practice, you can improve your high school math marks!